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other parts of the poem. The form of the poem was found to be a combination of old English traditions with certain French elements, especially in the structure of the stanza. The entire poem is an interesting example of a transition period in the literature. Though not able to break away altogether from the fetters of medieval tradition, the new beauties of the later literature—the dawn of the renaissance, as it were—are beginning to shine forth in the work of this author.

This paper was discussed by Professor J. B. Henneman.

# 17. Irregular Forms of the Possessive Pronouns in Italian. By Mr. L. Emil Menger, of the Johns Hopkins University.

Professor J. E. Matzke :

The whole problem which, perhaps, was not stated as clearly as it might have been, is simply this. Any one who opens the life of the celebrated sculptor Benvenuto Cellini, and reads along on any page, soon becomes impressed with the many curious nominative plurals of the possessive pronouns *mia*, *tua*, etc., which are used with a great degree of frequency. The problem is, How are these to be explained? Benvenuto Cellini represents, as far as his language is concerned, the Florentine dialect of the beginning of the 16th century. The explanation, of course, can be attempted in several ways,—phonetically, analogically, morphologically. The only good phonetic explanation is the one referred to by Mr. Menger, which has been given by Meyer-Lübke in his Italian grammar. According to this scholar *mia* derives from Latin *mei* in a similar way as popular Tuscan *lia* goes back to the regular *lei*; and he distinctly affirms the process to have been phonetic.

I can conceive of no phonetic development by which this change could have taken place. Mr. Menger justly asks the question, If *ei* becomes *ia* according to phonetic law, why did not every other *ei* become *ia* in Tuscan speech? The suggestion which Mr. Menger makes that possibly the first sound of the word, which is *l* in this case, may have had something to do with the raising of the vowel *e* to *i*, I think is well taken. The fact remains that there is only this one word where *ei* actually becomes *ia*. In one place where he has found it, it is spelled *glia* and actually shows a palatal *l*. Whether that explains the whole development of *lei* to *lia*, or not, I would not affirm. If true, the final vowel *a* might be explained as due to that tendency of Tuscan speech, mentioned by D'Ovidio in *Arch. Glott.*, Vol. IX, which favors an *a* at the end of the word.

A phonetic explanation not being probable, we next look for an analogical explanation, and there we find only one—that of the feminine singular. Mr. Menger shows that this also is not probable. This feminine singular is by no means the form most frequently used. The discussion of Mr.

Menger is most interesting. It leads the question back to the most simple explanation of the whole problem, namely : that it is a simple continuation, in that under current of popular speech, of the Latin neuter plurals. These have lived on in the Italian language to the present day, and have cropped out in literature at various times.

They have evidently lived on rightfully with nouns that are also preserved in their neuter plural forms, as *braccia*, *dita*, *ginocchia*, *labbra*. One of the oldest examples of *mia* happens to be in connection with *braccia* (*le mia braccia*, in Dante), an occurrence which goes far to prove the truth of Mr. Menger's position. Thus established, the use of the neuter plural forms grows to be a mannerism with certain writers, until we come to the 16th century. Then the literary language becomes fixed, the laws of grammar become established, and *mia* disappears from the literary speech, but lives on in the popular speech.

I think the paper of Mr. Menger is valuable in giving a reasonable solution of a problem which had been complicated by supposing it to be phonetic, when it was really nothing but a mere growth of existing Latin forms.

18. J. G. Schottel's Influence on the Development of the Modern German *Schriftsprache*. By Professor H. C. G. von Jagemann, of Harvard University.

This paper was discussed by Professors J. E. Matzke, A. Gudeman, A. M. Elliott, and H. Schönfeld.

Dr. J. W. Pearce then offered the following resolution :

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Association be extended to the President and the Board of Trustees of the Columbian University for the generous entertainment of this convention, and

*Resolved*, That this Association return its thanks to Professor A. Melville Bell, President of the Phonetic Section, for the pleasant Reception given to the members of this Association, at his residence, on Thursday evening.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

The Association then adjourned.

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